

Assemblyman
PAUL KORETZ
Forty-second Assembly District



proudly representing the communities of West Hollywood, Beverly Hills, Los Angeles, Century City, Westwood, Bel Air, Brentwood, West Los Angeles, Hollywood, Hancock Park, Universal City, Studio City, and Sherman Oaks

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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KORETZ ASSAILS SUPREME COURT RULING ON STATES' MEDICAL MARIJUANA LAWS – *Compassionate Use Act still the law in California*

West Hollywood – In response to today's United States Supreme Court Ruling in Gonzales v. Raich, Assemblyman Paul Koretz (D-West Hollywood) called upon the Schwarzenegger Administration and law enforcement to continue enforcing the state's Compassionate Use Act (Proposition 215), which governs the use of medical marijuana. The Compassionate Use Act allows patients with official identification cards to possess up to 8 ounces of dried marijuana and to grow between 6 and 12 marijuana plants.

"Every day, medical marijuana provides desperately needed relief for thousands of California citizens suffering from the ravages of diseases like cancer, AIDS, leukemia, and multiple sclerosis," stated Koretz, clearly upset by the ruling. "It is unconscionable that the Supreme Court would endorse the federal harassment of medical marijuana patients. Medical marijuana saves lives and reduces pain in terminally ill patients. This is a decision that I think will kill innocent people. President Bush always says that we should err on the side of life, and in this particular case, I agree."

In 1996, California voters enacted the Compassionate Use Act, which protects seriously ill patients from arrest for use and against seizure of medical cannabis to relieve their suffering if approved by their physician.

"In light of today's decision, we need assurances from Governor Schwarzenegger, Attorney General Lockyer, and state and local law enforcement that patients will still have safe access to medical marijuana," Koretz further stated. "It is critical that California law enforcement not in any way impede the rights of patients to have access to needed medicine, including cooperation with federal law enforcement in frustration of California law. State government officials must respect the will of the voters, who adopted California's medical marijuana law in 1996."

According to Koretz, it is now up to Congress to protect the right of states to allow their citizens to have access to needed medicine with proven benefits. Given these benefits, it's also time for Congress to take a look at rescheduling marijuana under the federal Controlled Substances Act.

Assemblyman Koretz co-chairs the Los Angeles Medical Marijuana Task Force. The main goal of the task force is to assist and educate local government on how to implement the Compassionate Use Act, and SB 420 (2003), which addressed certain implementation concerns surrounding Prop 215.

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